



# BILATERAL MEETING IN SLOVENIA



20th – 25th April

EURO SCHOOL LINKS



After a long wait since February III. osnovna šola Celje was finally able to welcome her guests from Santiago de Compostela for our official second bilateral meeting within the Euro School Links Comenius partnership. This is a short report of it.

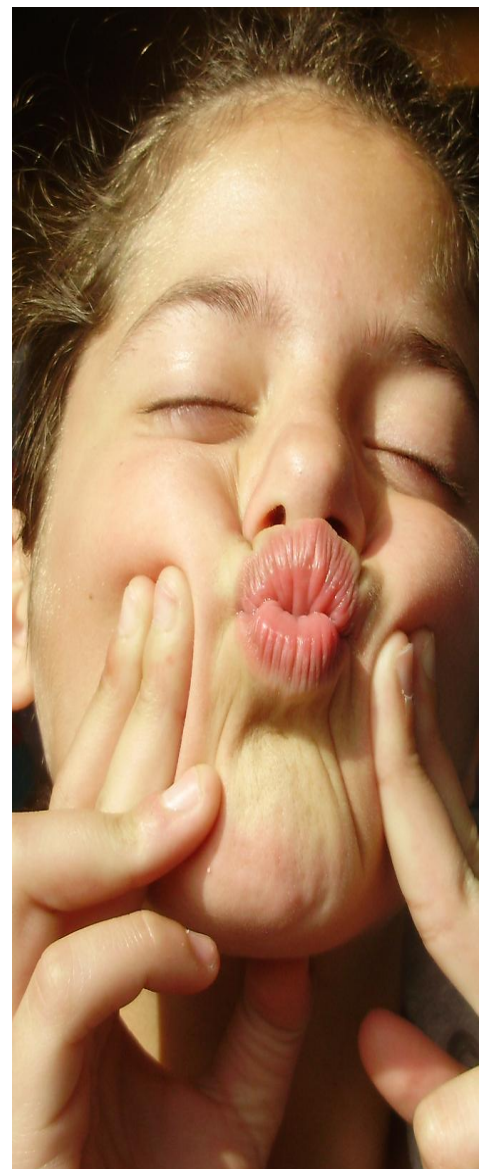


# BILATERAL MEETING IN SLOVENIA

## A CHANCE TO MEET OLD FRIENDS AGAIN

### Friday, 20<sup>th</sup> April

Ever since our group of 6 pupils and 2 teachers returned from our visit to Santiago in Spain we have been eagerly awaiting for our opportunity to host our Spanish fiends (Xiana, Alicia, Carolina, Uxia, Elena, Manuel with Roberto and Pilar) in Slovenia. The wait seemed excruciatingly long and tedious but as they say all things come to those who wait. It was just another Friday afternoon for most, but for us it was a long expected chance to greet our friends and invite them to spend a week with us in Slovenia. The sky may have been crying a little, but our hearts were all aflutter and our arms and hands couldn't stop waving once our eyes caught a glimpse of the van that brought them to our school all the way from Venice. Our pupils, their parents, our staff and our guests were rejoiced to be able to shake hands after what seemed an eternity and after a short pause to stretch their backs we welcomed the Spanish team into our school. Ivan Janez Domitrovič, the headmaster, Aleksander Verhovšek and Metka Vajdič, project coordinators, said a few word of welcome, expressed a heartfelt feeling of happiness and warmth about this meeting finally taking place and after providing some additional pieces of information about the plans for the week to follow and our itinerary our guest were invited to go to their new homes where they could relax and rest for the evening before things really kicked off the next day.



### Saturday, 21<sup>st</sup> April

Before we knew it was Saturday and unlike any normal Saturday we had to go to school. Usually this would mean a lot of sad and long faces on the school hallways, but since this was not your ordinary school day there was none of that. It was our “Austrian Day”, a special day dedicated to our neighboring country we are have been learning about ever since September. Our school is namely a part of the so called “European Village” national project where schools involved would get a different EU country each year and their job is to get to know it and prepare a stall for the official presentation of all EU countries on Celje’s main square. This year this commemoration is to be held on 9<sup>th</sup> May and we took this opportunity to show our Spanish friends what this project involved. There were a number of workshops organized for children of all ages and the main focus of our work was anything to do with Austria. With our younger pupils it was more about playing games, making drawings or learning songs, whereas our older pupils worked on building a Hundertwasser–style house, recreating Klimt’s art, giving a Mozart’s concert as well as making a variety of different but useful items and products we can use for our presentation in May. These included needle–point work, making Austrian cookie–flags and Mozartkugeln, T–shirts, clay houses, posters, brochures, decorative boxes and so on. An interesting day indeed.



### *Some thoughts from our and Spanish students about the exchange*

Photos above: some of the artwork created

*“After the travel, I was very impressed because I didn't know how people live in Spain. Well, for me they go to bed very late and they also eat dinner very late– for me this was little more hard. But I liked that school starts at nine o'clock. In majority I like Spain very much. Everything was too short, so I want to return.” (Jošt)*



Photo above: one of Vienna's museums

Photo below: House of experiments



### Sunday, 22<sup>nd</sup> April

Since we've spent Saturday getting to know everything about Austria, what better way to finish things off than by visiting the country. And that's exactly what we did. A group of 52 had to get up at 5 a.m. in the morning, get on the bus and head for Vienna, Austria's capital. It was a fun all-day trip with visits to the Donauturm, Schönbrunn, the downtown centre with shops, museums, theatres, the House of butterflies and so much more. We didn't miss out on some of Austria's best known desserts like Sachertorte and apple strudel. Too bad it only lasted a day, though. Well, maybe next time we can stay longer.

*"Slovenia is the most beautiful place. It is different and is smaller than Santiago. All is different, the food, the sport, the people...Is very nice know another countries with exchanges but this exchange was very short for me because five days...I love Slovenia and I would like to come back."* (Carolina)

### Monday, 23<sup>rd</sup> April

Our second largest city, Maribor, became one of the two European Culture Capitals for a year and we thought we could take this opportunity and visit it together. We took the train rather than rent a bus or a van since we are an eco project and using public transport is very important in trying to reduce car related environmental issues. Maribor proved to be a charming little town where we could admire some of its sights, walk through some of the exhibitions, visit the House of experiments, stroll down the Drava river and feed the swans there and managed to lose one bag. Luckily for us, two honest young boys found it and returned it to Taja who was relieved she got her camera back because all her memories from the past few days were still on the SIM card in it. Enough excitement for today, we thought, and returned home just before the rain.

*"Slovenia is a beautiful country and Celje is beautiful too, but it's smaller than Santiago. The food is delicious and very different from ours. Here, the lessons start very soon and I would like the exchange to be longer because five days is too short."* (Elena)

### Tuesday, 24<sup>th</sup> April

It was time to go back to school again but since we saw no point in not taking advantage of having our special guests around we again decided to make thing a little different. Just like Saturday, we invited our friends to take part in our Ecoday workshops. It's a day we have each year around this time and it gives us a chance to clean the school's surrounding a bit, get some cleaning done in the nearby forests and hiking routs as well as collect some recyclable materials and make art from it. This year was about jewelry, making flowers from paper and nylons, reusing old and worn-out shoes and many more things. We think we all enjoyed this day, our pupils especially, since they didn't have their normal classes and lessons.

*"When we came to Spain I was very suprised about what I saw. They have some interesting buildings and places. The rhythm of life is different than ours. I was also suprised about their school program. Comenius project is very good for our education. We met a lot of different people. I had a great time and some day I would like to visit Spain again."* (Jasmina)

*"I think it was nice for all of us to get to know how people in other countries live and Comenius project was an excellent experience for me and for everyone else. Spain is a beautiful country, but is very different than Slovenia. They eat special food, they have different school program and they really live differently. I will definitely go back to Santiago some day."* (Taja)

Photo below: artificial flowers made of used nylon stockings



*"In Spain I like everything. But most the Spanish food (spanish tortilla). Their school is very nice. The life is different. I like Santigo because it's bigger than Celje. Spain is a nice country."* (Miha)

*"Slovenia is very beautiful. Celje is big and is cold. Slovenia is very big. Vienna is very big and is very beautiful. The food is delicious but I don't like the apple strudel. NEVER FORGET!"* (Alicia)

Photos below: saying  
goodbye



*"I liked Slovenia and the places we have visited. I felt mui good but the food was different too I think. I want to return to Slovenia algundia because I liked meeting people, school ...what I liked most is The Most Beautiful Slovenia place. It is different and is smaller than Santiago. All is different, the food, the sport, the people ... Is very nice know another country clubs with exchanges but this exchange was very short for me because ... I love five days and I would like Slovenia to come back or go to another house learn about other cultures."* (Uxia)

### Wednesday, 25<sup>th</sup> April

Before we even realized it Wednesday was here already and so was the time to leave. Unfortunately, things you enjoy the most never tend to last as long as you'd like them to. But we couldn't let our guests go before taking them on the tour round the city of Celje. We've been postponing this tour until the weather cleared up so that our guests could be more impressed. ☺ Seriously though, we just haven't had the time to do so before. After the tour we sat down for our last lunch together and slowly reaching for our handkerchiefs. We knew this day was coming but no one prepared us for it. When I say it was time for handkerchiefs I am not over exaggerating because there were tears and cries when the van came to pick the Spanish students up. "Parting is such sweet sorrow" Shakespeare once wrote but on a brighter note, meeting your friends again is so much sweeter. We're bound to see each other again since our project will go on for another full year and we have all the technology we need at our fingertips today to keep in contact and never let our friends forget we are fond of them.

*"Spain and trip to Santiago was something new for me. Country and people are different. I'm happy, because I met new people and new friends. I saw many new things. Now I can say that I was in Spain ☺ People in Spain call me Lehla, and now my friends call me Lehla. It was nice to us to get know something about Spain. The trip was great experiance for me. I had great time and I would like to visit Spain and Santiago back."* (Lejla)

*"In Spain everything is very different. They eat different food, their school program is different than ours, but I like to get to know different cultures, so the trip in Santiago was a great experience for me and I would love to go back one day." (Nina)*

### The official farewell dinner

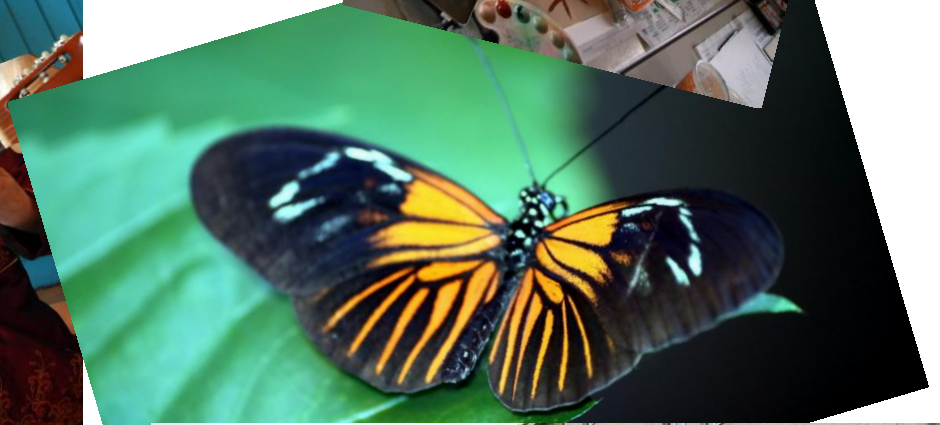
Since Wednesday was not a good time for a proper farewell we asked our pupils, parents, staff and dear guests to join us at the school on Tuesday evening. There was a short programme the pupils prepared themselves earlier that afternoon. They've made three PowerPoint presentations about the visit using their photos and other materials at their disposal. The presentations were multilingual (Slovene, English, Galician) and helped us remember some of the things we've done and seen since Friday. Some very nice things and lots of kind words were said and expressed and we felt privileged to have had this opportunity to meet, work and genuinely connect to our Spanish partners. After all the speeches were over it was time for all of us to sit down and have a little something to eat. The farewell lasted well into the night and went to our beds smiling.

Photo below: official farewell at the school



*"Slovenia is very different. I love Celje, because in Celje there are mountains and houses, two things in one. The food is delicious, but is strange for me and my friends. In Celje I learn a lot of things in Slovenia. I like so much Slovenia." (Xiana)*







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*Disclaimer: This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication [communication] reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.*

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Thank you dear readers for your kind attention and support. We would especially like to thank all our co-workers who have made this bilateral visit possible. Thank you for your help, support and many hours you've sacrificed for making this a success.

Aleksander Verhovšek and Metka Vajdič,  
Project coordinators